

PPM 450

INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT (IPE)

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GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR IPE DEVELOPMENT**450.01 IPE REQUIREMENT**

The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor must assure that an Individualized Plan for Employment (hereinafter also referred to as the IPE, "plan of services," or "plan") meeting the requirements of this chapter is developed, implemented, and kept current:

- (1) for each individual determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services; or,
- (2) if the Vocational Rehabilitation Program is operating under an order of selection procedure, for each eligible individual to whom the program is able to provide services.

[REQUIRED PRACTICE. Consistent with the requirements of PPM 430.16(2), if the program is operating under an order of selection, no IPE is to be developed for eligible individuals assigned to an unserved (closed) priority category and placed on the deferred services waiting list (i.e., in program status 81) until such time as the individual can be served.]

450.02 PURPOSE

The IPE must be designed to achieve a specific employment outcome that is selected in accordance with the individual's informed choice, consistent with his or her vocational strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, and career interests.

450.03 INFORMATION USED AS THE BASIS FOR IPE DEVELOPMENT**(1) PREPARATION BASED ON THE ASSESSMENT FOR DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY FOR SERVICES**

To the greatest extent possible, the employment outcome and the nature and scope of vocational rehabilitation services included in the individual's IPE must be determined based on information secured and documented during the assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services described in PPM chapter 420.

(2) PREPARATION BASED ON A COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT FOR DETERMINING VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION NEEDS

To the extent that the information secured and documented during the assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services does not adequately describe the current functioning of the individual and his or her vocational strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, and career interests, the employment outcome and the nature and scope of vocational rehabilitation services included in the individual's IPE must be determined based on additional information secured and documented in a comprehensive assessment for determining vocational rehabilitation needs provided in accordance with the requirements of PPM chapter 440.

[REQUIRED PRACTICE. In preparing the IPE, the individuals and entities involved in developing it must use, to the maximum extent possible and appropriate, subject to confidentiality and disclosure requirements, existing information that is current as of the date of the development of the IPE, including: (1) information provided by the individual and the individual's family; (2) information available from other programs and providers, especially information obtained from education officials and the Social Security Administration; and (3) information secured and documented for the assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services. Additional diagnostic and evaluative information can be sought and a comprehensive assessment to determine vocational rehabilitation needs can be provided only to the extent that the information already obtained for the assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services does not accurately reflect the current functioning of the individual and his or her vocational strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, and career interests.]

450.04 TIMELINESS GUIDELINE

(1) The Individualized Plan for Employment must initially be completed and approved, and services planned under the IPE must be initiated, in a timely manner:

(A) as soon as possible, but not more than 120 calendar days, following the date of the eligibility determination made in accordance with PPM chapter 421; or

(B) later, if the eligible individual (or the individual's representative) and the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor or another qualified professional employed by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program first jointly agree to an extension of time of specified duration to complete and initiate the IPE.

(2) Any extension of time agreed to under paragraph (1)(B) of this section must be:

(A) agreed to by both the individual (or, if applicable, the individual's representative) and the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor or another qualified professional employed by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program;

(B) agreed to prior to the expiration of the timeliness guideline (120 calendar days) described in paragraph (1)(A) of this section; and

(C) for a specified duration that has been clearly defined.

[REQUIRED PRACTICE. Any extension of time agreed to and its compliance with the requirements of paragraph (2) of this section must be fully documented in the record of services for the individual by a dated case note as to justification, the agreement of both parties, and the specific duration of the extension.]

450.05 NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENT

The assigned Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor must notify each eligible individual (and, as applicable, each individual's representative) concerning the requirements pertaining to the development of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) described in this chapter, especially the options for developing the IPE described in section 450.06. The notification required by this section must be provided in writing, supplemented, as necessary, in the language, alternative format, or appropriate mode of communication consistent with his or her informed choice, and must also include, as appropriate for each individual:

(1) an explanation of the criteria and guidelines for determining an eligible individual's financial participation responsibilities, as described in PPM chapter 610;

(2) the availability of assistance for completing program forms required as part of the plan;

(3) the right of the individual to seek a review of Counselor and Vocational Rehabilitation Program determinations and actions through

mediation and a formal appeal proceeding, in accordance with PPM chapter 320;

(4) the availability of the client assistance program (CAP), the services available through the CAP, and the means by which the CAP can be contacted for assistance, as described in PPM chapter 310; and

(5) any additional information that the individual requests or the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor determines to be necessary for the development of the IPE.

PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS

450.06 OPTIONS FOR DEVELOPING AN IPE

Consistent with each individual's abilities and informed choice, the eligible individual (or, as applicable, the individual's representative) may develop all or any part of the plan of services:

(1) independently, without assistance from the Vocational Rehabilitation Program or any other individual or entity; or

(2) with the assistance of—

(A) a qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor employed by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program; and/or

(B) a qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor who is not employed by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program; and/or

(C) any other individual or entity of his or her informed choice not described in paragraphs (2)(A) and (B) of this section.

[REQUIRED PRACTICE. For purposes of paragraph (2)(C) of this section, the persons or entities "not described in paragraphs (2)(A) and (B)" might include, but are not limited to, the assistance of a family member, a client assistance program (CAP) representative, and/or any other representative or advocate chosen by the eligible individual or the individual's representative.]

450.07 REQUIRED FORMAT

Each plan of services must be in writing, prepared on Vocational Rehabilitation Program forms.

450.08 OPPORTUNITIES TO EXERCISE INFORMED CHOICE

(1) Regardless of the option selected by the individual for IPE development or the individuals or entities involved in plan development as described in section 450.06, the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor must assure that the individual (and, if applicable, the individual's representative) is accorded maximum opportunities for full and meaningful participation in the development of the Individualized Plan for Employment and, as applicable, any plan amendment, including meaningful opportunities to exercise his or her informed choice in the selection of:

(A) the employment outcome goal identified in the IPE, including the work setting for employment outcome;

(B) the specific vocational rehabilitation services determined to be necessary to achieve the employment outcome and to be provided, including the settings in which the services will be provided;

(C) the service providers from whom the necessary services will be secured; and

(D) the methods by which the services will be secured.

(2) To assist each eligible individual in the exercise of informed choice during development of the plan of services, the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor is required to provide the individual or the individual's representative, or must assist the individual or the individual's representative in acquiring, information necessary to make an informed choice concerning the specific vocational rehabilitation services needed to achieve the individual's employment outcome goal, and the service providers to be utilized. The information provided must include, at a minimum:

(A) the cost, accessibility, and duration of potential services;

(B) consumer satisfaction with those services to the extent that such information relating to consumer satisfaction is available;

(C) the qualifications of potential service providers;

(D) types of services offered by the available providers;

(E) the degree to which services are provided in integrated settings; and

(F) the outcomes achieved by individuals working with the service providers, to the extent that such information is available.

(3) In providing or assisting the individual or the individual's representative in acquiring the information described in paragraph (2) of this section, the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor may use the following methods and sources of information:

(A) lists of services and service providers;

(B) periodic consumer satisfaction surveys and reports;

(C) referrals to other consumers, consumer groups, or disability advisory councils qualified to discuss the services or service providers;

(D) relevant accreditation, certification, licensing, or other information relating to the qualifications of service providers; and

(E) opportunities for individuals to visit or experience various work and service provider settings.

450.09 APPROVAL AND EFFECTIVE DATE

(1) The Individualized Plan for Employment must be agreed to and signed and dated by the eligible individual (or, as applicable, by the individual's representative) and by the assigned Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor or other qualified professional employed by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program and the Area Supervisor.

(2) Once the individual and the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor or other qualified professional employed by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program have signed the IPE, the supervisor must complete a review of the proposed plan and either sign and date it as approved or return it to the Counselor for further work within five business days.

(3) The IPE is not effective, and cannot be implemented, until it has been agreed to and signed in accordance with the requirements of this section.

450.10 TICKET TO WORK

When an individual who has a Ticket to Work from Social Security signs his or her IPE, the ticket may be assigned to Vocational Rehabilitation unless it is already assigned to another employment network (EN) with which VR has a memorandum of understanding. This is necessary in order for VR to claim and receive reimbursement from the Social Security Administration for the cost of the VR services provided. If an individual chooses not to assign his or her ticket to VR (and it is not already assigned to another EN), the ticket may be automatically assigned to VR in the future, in the event that failure to do so would cause VR to lose reimbursement funding.

[REQUIRED PRACTICE. See the appendices to the manual for information regarding assigning tickets and other Ticket To Work issues.]

450.11 DISTRIBUTION OF COPIES

The original signed plan, and each original signed amendment, must be incorporated into and retained permanently in the record of services for the individual. A copy of the plan and each plan amendment must be provided to the individual (or, as applicable, to the individual's representative) in writing supplemented, as necessary, in the appropriate language, alternate format, or other appropriate mode of communication consistent with his or her informed choice.

450.12 PERIODIC REVIEW

(1) Each Individualized Plan for Employment and amendment must be reviewed as often as may be necessary and appropriate, but at least annually, by the eligible individual (or, as applicable, the individual's representative) and the assigned Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor or

another qualified professional employed by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, in order to:

(A) evaluate the benefits gained by the individual from the services provided and assess his or her progress in achieving the employment outcome identified by the plan; and

(B) assess the continued applicability of the current IPE or the need to amend or terminate it.

(2) Each such review must be conducted, as needed, using appropriate modes of communication, and the individual (or individual's representative, as applicable) must be advised regarding the availability of such accommodations.

(3) If the plan review process reveals that the individual is determined to be no longer eligible for vocational rehabilitation services or that the record of services must be closed for reasons other than a determination that the individual is not eligible, the IPE must be terminated, services discontinued, and the record of services closed.

[REQUIRED PRACTICE. Each IPE and IPE amendment is valid for a period of not more than 12 calendar months and expires at the end of that time, becoming null and void, unless it is first reviewed and either continued without amendment or amended, as may be appropriate. There is no authority to provide vocational rehabilitation services to any eligible individual without an effective plan. The assigned Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor or other qualified professional employed by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program is, therefore, required to assure that: (1) IPE reviews are scheduled and occur in a timely manner, prior to plan expiration; (2) the IPE is continued without amendment or amended, as needed; and (3) to the maximum extent possible, a current IPE is maintained for each eligible individual without gaps in coverage. In the event that an IPE expires without being continued or amended, further service provision is disallowed until such time as the plan has been appropriately extended or amended and the extension or amendment has been approved. Should a break in IPE coverage occur while an individual remains eligible for program participation, the break must be explained by appropriate case notes in the individual's record of services. The assigned Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor or other qualified professional employed by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program must also ensure that no vocational rehabilitation services are provided for an active program participant under an expired or invalid IPE.]

450.13 CONTINUATION WITHOUT AMENDMENT

A current Individualized Plan for Employment can be continued without amendment, unless there are changes to the IPE sufficient to dictate that the plan must be formally amended, in accordance with the requirements of section 450.14 of this chapter.

[REQUIRED PRACTICE. If the plan is to be continued without amendment, the individual (or the individual's representative) and the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor or other qualified professional employed by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program must agree to continue the existing plan without changes or with only minor changes not requiring a plan amendment. The continued plan must take effect (i.e., there must be agreement to continue) prior to the expiration of the immediately previous plan, plan continuation, or plan amendment. The plan can be continued as many times as necessary, but each continuation is valid for no more than 12 calendar months. With each additional continuation, a new review date (within 12 calendar months) must be scheduled. Each agreement to continue an existing plan of services must be acknowledged by an appropriate case note.]

450.14 IPE AMENDMENT

The Individualized Plan for Employment must be formally amended as often as there are substantive changes to the plan provisions. Each amendment must be agreed to and signed by the eligible individual (or, as applicable, by the individual's representative), the assigned Counselor or another qualified professional employed by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, and the applicable Area Supervisor, as described in section 450.09 of this chapter. For purposes of this section, substantive changes include, and an IPE amendment is required, for any change:

- (1) of the planned employment outcome identified in the IPE—
 - (A) from any one to another of competitive employment without supports, supported employment, self employment (including, but not limited to, the ownership and operation of a small business enterprise), Randolph-Sheppard vending facility operator/worker, homemaking, and unpaid family work, or
 - (B) to a different occupational title, as determined by the first six digits of the applicable Dictionary of Occupational Title (DOT) codes;

(2) which adds, deletes, or substantially modifies any service to be provided, unless—

(A) it can be demonstrated that delaying the change(s) to effect plan amendment would delay job placement, or the eligible individual and the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor are in agreement that the indicated change(s) in service provision must be made immediately in order to maintain satisfactory progress toward the achievement of the employment outcome, and

(B) prior supervisory approval is obtained and documented in the record of services to initiate the change in service(s) without first amending the IPE and the IPE is subsequently amended in writing within 10 business days to reflect the change(s) made; or

(3) affecting the criteria by which the individual's progress toward achievement of his or her employment outcome is to be evaluated or any other of the provisions noted in the plan as being the responsibility of the individual or the family of the individual.

[REQUIRED PRACTICE. Any change of service provider from those identified in the plan must be acknowledged by an appropriate record of services notation, but does not require an amendment of the plan of services.]

CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

450.15 MANDATORY COMPONENTS FOR ALL IPEs

Each IPE must include:

(1) information identifying the IPE, as applicable, as a rehabilitation plan or a supported employment plan;

(2) a description of the specific employment outcome that has been chosen by the eligible individual in accordance with his or her own vocational rehabilitation needs and informed choice, consistent with his or her vocational strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, and career interests;

[REQUIRED PRACTICE. The employment outcome identified in each IPE or IPE amendment must be described in terms of a particular type of profession (such as "general laborer," "food service worker," "clerical office worker," "kitchen worker," "retail salesperson," or "medical transcriptionist"). An employment outcome described only by the broad category of the work performed (e.g., "competitive employment," "supported employment," or "self employment") is too vague, and is unacceptable, except in the case of "homemaking" or "unpaid family work."]

(3) the date on which the employment outcome specified in accordance with the requirements of paragraph (2) of this section is anticipated to be achieved;

(4) a description of the specific vocational rehabilitation services to be provided under the plan, as determined to be relevant and necessary for the individual to achieve the employment outcome identified in the plan;

(5) the anticipated beginning and ending dates for each service described in accordance with paragraph (4) of this section as to be provided;

(6) identification of the service providers chosen by the individual to provide each of the specific vocational rehabilitation services described in paragraph (4) of this section as to be provided;

(7) a description of the method by which each of the services described in paragraph (4) of this section will be procured;

(8) the terms and conditions of the IPE for service provision, including—

(A) those terms and conditions which are the responsibility of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, including, but not limited to, the conditions and limitations for providing the vocational rehabilitation services identified in the plan as to be provided,

(B) the terms and conditions of the IPE which are the responsibility of the individual (and, as applicable, the individual's family) with respect to

(1) maintaining satisfactory progress toward achieving the specified employment outcome and

(2) meeting all fiscal accountability requirements described in PPM chapter 600, including as applicable the responsibility to apply for and secure all appropriate and available comparable services and benefits and meet all financial participation requirements, if any), and

(C) the terms and conditions of the IPE which are the responsibility of entities identified as comparable services and benefits providers;

(9) a description of the criteria that will be used to evaluate the progress of the individual toward the achievement of the specified employment outcome;

(10) (to the extent appropriate) prior to closing the record of services of any individual who has successfully achieved an employment outcome, statements providing a description of—

(A) any post-employment services expected to be needed and to be provided,

(B) the terms and conditions for the provision of the post-employment services identified, and

(C) any comparable services and benefits that will be utilized in the provision of the post-employment services identified;

(11) information describing the right of the individual to seek a review of Counselor and Vocational Rehabilitation Program determinations through mediation and/or an administrative hearing, in accordance with the requirements of PPM chapter 320;

(12) a statement regarding the availability and purpose of the client assistance program (CAP) and how the CAP may be contacted for assistance, as described in PPM chapter 310;

(13) a statement identifying the method by which the IPE was developed and the persons or entities participating in the IPE development process described in section 450.06 of this chapter;

(14) a statement indicating that the IPE was developed in a manner which provided the individual (or his or her representative) with opportunities to

make informed choices with respect to the individual's employment outcome goal, vocational rehabilitation services to be provided, and the service providers and procurement methods utilized;

(15) the signature and signature date of the individual (or, if applicable, of the individual's representative) and those of the assigned Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor or other qualified professional employed by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program and the Area Supervisor, as required in accordance with section 450.09;

(16) a statement indicating that the individual or the individual's representative has received a copy of the IPE or IPE amendment, as required in accordance with section 450.11 of this chapter; and

(17) the anticipated next review date, as required by section 450.12 of this chapter.

450.16 ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT IPEs

In addition to the content requirements specified in section 450.15 of this chapter, an IPE for an individual with a most significant disability for whom an employment outcome in a supported employment setting has been determined to be appropriate must:

(1) assure that the employment outcome to be achieved is identified as a supported employment outcome and consists of job placement in an integrated work setting for the maximum number of hours possible, based on the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual;

(2) provide for periodic monitoring to assure that the individual is making satisfactory progress toward meeting the weekly work requirement established in the IPE by the time of transition to extended services;

(3) specify the supported employment services to be provided by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program;

(4) to the extent that job skills training is provided, identify that the training will be provided on site;

(5) assure that supported employment services provided by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program will be provided for a period of time not to exceed 18 months after initial job placement, unless the eligible individual (or the individual's representative) and the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor jointly agree to extend one or more of the services specified by the plan in order to achieve the employment outcome identified in the IPE;

[REQUIRED PRACTICE. For purposes of paragraph (5) of this section, any extension of Vocational Rehabilitation Program supported employment services beyond a period of 18 months after placement requires a joint agreement by the individual (or the individual's representative) and the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor or other qualified professional employed by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program that an extension of the service or services for the specified period of time is necessary for the individual to achieve the employment outcome identified in the IPE and is likely to result in such achievement. In all such instances, the duration of the extension provided must be for a specifically described period of time.]

(6) specify the extended services anticipated to be needed (which may include family and community supports, if appropriate);

(7) identify prior to closure of the record of services the anticipated extended services provider or, to the extent that it is not possible to identify an extended services provider at the time the IPE or amendment is developed, include a description of the basis for concluding that a provider will become available; and

(8) provide for the coordination of services provided under an IPE with services provided under other individualized plans established under other federal or state programs.

450.17 ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR IPEs OF TRANSITIONING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

(1) An IPE for a transitioning student with a disability must be coordinated with the individualized education plan (IEP) for that individual in terms of the outcomes, objectives, and services identified, and in accordance with the plans, policies, procedures, and terms of the interagency agreement governing the coordination of services for transitioning students between the Vocational Rehabilitation Program and education officials.

(2) In the case of each transitioning student, the IPE must assure that the services identified as to be provided by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program do not duplicate or supplant services for which the school bears primary responsibility.

[REQUIRED PRACTICE. See PPM chapter 510 for more information regarding transition services.]

RECORD OF SERVICES DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

450.18 RECORD OF SERVICES CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

The record of services of the individual must include, as applicable to each individual:

- (1) an initial Individualized Plan for Employment meeting the requirements of this chapter for each eligible individual who has received services through the Vocational Rehabilitation Program;
- (2) the information upon which the IPE and any plan amendments have been based, in accordance with section 450.03 of this chapter;
- (3) information regarding the provision of the notifications required under section 450.05;
- (4) evidence demonstrating that, if the individual has a Ticket to Work, it has been assigned to the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, or to another employment network (EN) with which VR has a memorandum of understanding, prior to the provision of any vocational rehabilitation services under an IPE; and
- (5) notations regarding the reviews conducted as required by section 450.12 of this chapter and the resulting termination, continuation, or revision of the IPE described in sections 450.12, 450.13, and 450.14, as applicable.

450.19 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEM COMPLIANCE

All required information, data, and documents must be incorporated into and maintained in the record of services for the individual in a manner

consistent with Indiana Rehabilitation Information System (IRIS) requirements.

[AUTHORITY: Federal regulations 34 CFR §§361.5(b)(6), (10), (15), (16), (19), (33), (53), (55); 361.13(c); 361.42; 361.45; 361.46; 361.47; 361.50; 361.52; 361.53; 361.54.]

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